

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ATTACKED IN HIS HOME

Human rights defender Marino Alvarado and his nine-year-old son were attacked by three armed men in their home. He, his family and other colleagues may be at risk of further attacks.

According to a statement by Venezuelan NGO Venezuelan Program for Education and Action on Human Rights (Provea), on 1 October at approximately 5.30 pm, human rights defender **Marino Alvarado and his nine-year-old son** were confronted by three armed men inside the building where they live in Caracas, the capital. They were coming back from his son's school when the three armed men forced them into their home. Once inside, Marino Alvarado and his son were held for 40 minutes with their hands tied while the armed men took two laptops, a tablet, two mobile phones, a camera and cash. Marino Alvarado was also beaten on the head.

Marino Alvarado is the former director of Provea. He continues to collaborate with the organization as well as write commentary pieces for newspapers. On 21 August President Nicolás Maduro slandered the work of Provea on national television, stating it was a right-wing organization and specifically mentioned that Marino Alvarado received funding from the United States government and that he used to work as a police informant during the previous government.

In September, Marino Alvarado and other members of Provea requested that the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights grant them precautionary measures as they feared for their safety.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into the attack on Marino Alvarado and his son, which appear to be in reprisal for Marino Alvarado's work as a human rights defender;
- Urging them to take all appropriate measures to guarantee the right to life and physical integrity of Marino Alvarado and his family, in accordance with their wishes in order to fulfil their obligation to protect human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;
- Urging them to stop any attempts to discredit human rights defenders, in particular by halting all public declarations by high-ranking authorities that attack and smear the legitimate work of human rights defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 NOVEMBER 2015 TO:

President

Sr. Nicolás Maduro Moros
 Presidente de la Republica
 Final Avenida Urdaneta, Esquina de Bolero,
 Palacio de Miraflores
 Caracas, Venezuela
 Twitter: @NicolasMaduro

Salutation: Señor Presidente/

Dear President

Attorney General of the Republic

Dra. Luisa Ortega Díaz
 Edificio Sede Principal del Ministerio
 Público, Esquinas de Misericordia a Pele El
 Ojo Avenida México
 Caracas, Venezuela
 Email: ministeriopublico@mp.gob.ve

Fax: +58 212 578 3239

Salutation: Dra. Fiscal / Dear Prosecutor

And copies to:

Ombudsman

Tarek William Saab
 Defensor del Pueblo
 Av. Urdaneta - Frente a El Universal
 Centro Financiero Latino, Piso 27
 Caracas, Venezuela

Fax: +58 212 507 7025

Email: contacto@defensoria.gob.ve

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the situation of human rights defenders in Venezuela. The pattern of attacks and smear campaigns by the authorities at the highest level seriously jeopardizes their safety and ability to carry out their work in defence of human rights without reprisal.

Despite the commitment made by Venezuelan authorities to respect human rights defenders before the UN Human Rights Committee in June 2015 and the Committee Against Torture in November 2014, the harassment against them has not ceased. Of particular concern are public statements by high-ranking authorities against human rights defenders, especially after they have denounced human rights violations, either locally or before international and regional human rights bodies. The constant harassment of human rights defenders is one more example of the lack of tolerance of the Venezuelan authorities towards dissent and criticism.

Human rights defenders have repeatedly expressed concern that in a society as polarized as that in Venezuela, the ongoing attacks and smear campaigns on the part of the authorities at the highest level could incite government sympathizers, including pro-government armed groups, to intimidate them, including by carrying out physical attacks on them and their families.

Members of Provea have been the target of a stigmatization campaign by the Venezuelan authorities. In addition to the Venezuelan president's comments in August 2015, on 13 May the President of the National Assembly, Diosdado Cabello, made public the details of a trip by Rafael Uzcátegui, Provea's current Director, and Carlos Correa, Director of the NGO Espacio Público, in his weekly television program "Con el Mazo Dando". Some of the information that was broadcast had only been shared in their private online communications, which made them fear that the Venezuelan authorities had been monitoring their private communications.

At the end of March, Rafael Uzcátegui was also part of a group of 12 human rights defenders who were harassed and intimidated at the airport in Caracas on their return from hearings before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. Days earlier, the President of the National Assembly announced on his television program that a group of human rights defenders, who he identified by name, had come before the Inter-American Commission and publicly shared their return flight details (for more information, see: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR53/1772/2015/en/>). In July, United Nations and Inter-American human rights experts denounced the systematic targeting of human rights defenders on Venezuela's State-controlled television as attempts to discredit and intimidate human rights defenders.

Name: Marino Alvarado and his nine-year-old son
Gender m/f: m

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